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REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 31, 2007. Claims 1-18 were pending. By this Amendment, claim 3 has been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1, 5, 13, 14, 16 and 17 have been amended to include the features of now-canceled claim 3, and claim 4 has been amended to depend from claim 1. Accordingly, claims 1, 2 and 4-18 are now pending, with claims 1, 5, 13, 14, 16 and 17 being in independent form.

Claims 1, 2, 13 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as purportedly anticipated by Kitahara et al. (US2002/0018097A1). Claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kitahara in view of Matsumoto (US2002/0021312A1). Claims 9-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kitahara. Claims 5-7, 14, 15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kitahara in view of Ishii (US2003/0085978A1). Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kitahara in view of Ishii and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,467,119 to Richtsmeier et al.

Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 5, 13, 14, 16 and 17 are patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

This application relates to an improved approach for conveying a recording medium, such as in an inkjet recording device or other image forming apparatus. Such device or apparatus includes a conveyance belt and a guide unit arranged to push a portion of the conveyance belt from the inner side to approach a recording unit.

In one improvement, the guide unit has a number of projecting stripes or ribs in contact with the conveyance belt, with the projecting stripes arranged to be perpendicular to the rolling

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direction of the conveyance belt and arranged to push a portion of the conveyance belt from the inner side of the conveyance belt to outside of the conveyance belt so that the pushed portion of the conveyance belt is projected. Each of independent claims 1, 5, 13, 14, 16 and 17 of the present application addresses these features, as well as additional features. Such improvement enables the gap between a conveyance belt and a recording head to be precisely defined and good flatness of the conveyance belt and a recording medium being conveyed to be maintained.

Kitahara, as understood by Applicant, proposes a printer configured with a transportation belt, a printer head, and a pneumatic paper sucker. In the printer, print paper is adsorbed to the transportation belt by the sucker, and transported in a direction of transportation. Kitahara further proposes utilizing a flat-plate platen to apply tension to the belt while the belt is traveling.

However, Kitahara, as acknowledged in the Office Action, does not teach or suggest that the platen can have a number of projecting stripes or ribs in contact with the conveyance belt, with the projecting stripes arranged to be perpendicular to the rolling direction of the conveyance belt and arranged to push a portion of the conveyance belt from the inner side of the conveyance belt to outside of the conveyance belt so that the pushed portion of the conveyance belt is projected, as provided by the subject matter of claim 1 of the present application.

Matsumoto, as understood by Applicant, proposes a conveying apparatus configured to adsorb and convey a conveyed object. In the apparatus proposed by Matsumoto, a conveying belt 31 is provided with electrodes, a voltage is applied to the electrodes to generate an electric force, and a plurality of belt attracting means 37 attract the belt utilizing the electric force. Such electric force attracts the belt to enable cockling and vertical displacement of the conveyance belt to be suppressed.

Matsumoto further proposes that the plurality of belt attracting means 37 are

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perpendicular to the belt conveying direction. However, the plurality of belt attracting means 37 are provided to attract the belt and do not push a portion of the conveyance belt from the inner side of the conveyance belt to outside of the conveyance belt.

Matsumoto, like Kitahara, does not teach or suggest that it is desirable to have a guide unit that includes a number of projecting stripes or ribs in contact with the conveyance belt, with the projecting stripes arranged to be perpendicular to the rolling direction of the conveyance belt and arranged to push a portion of the conveyance belt from the inner side of the conveyance belt to outside of the conveyance belt so that the pushed portion of the conveyance belt is projected, as provided by the subject matter of claim 1 of the present application.

Further, even if the apparatus of Kitahara is modified based on Matsumoto, the modified apparatus would have a plurality of pneumatic paper suckers (instead of projecting stripes for pushing a portion of the conveyance belt from the inner side of the conveyance belt to outside of the conveyance belt) perpendicular to the belt conveying direction.

The other references (Ishii and Richtsmeier) do not cure such deficiencies of Kitahara and Matsumoto with respect to claim 1 of the present application.

Ishii, as understood by applicant, proposes an approach for transporting a sheet in an inkjet printer wherein the transportation surface is formed inclining so as to become higher toward a downstream side of transportation direction of the fixed material, and is transported while sucking the fixed material supplied on the fixed material transportation surface.

Richtsmeier, as understood by applicant, proposes a heating blower system for evaporating ink carriers from the print medium after ink-jet printing in a color ink-jet printer.

Applicant simply does not find teaching or suggestion in the cited art, however, of an inkjet recording device having a guide unit that includes a number of projecting stripes or ribs in

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contact with the conveyance belt, with the projecting stripes arranged to be perpendicular to the rolling direction of the conveyance belt and arranged to push a portion of the conveyance belt from the inner side of the conveyance belt to outside of the conveyance belt so that the pushed portion of the conveyance belt is projected, as provided by the subject matter of claim 1 of the present application.

Independent claims 5, 13, 14, 16 and 17 are patentably distinct from the cited art for at least similar reasons.

Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 5, 13, 14, 16 and 17, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art.

In view of the remarks hereinabove, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance, and earnestly solicits the allowance of the application.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition. The Patent Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees that are required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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